

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-8 remain in the application. Claims 1-8 are subject to examination. Claim 1 has been amended.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 2-4 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 1-6 and 8 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,137,072 to Martter et al. (hereinafter Martter) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Martter teaches a control panel 10 formed of an outer panel 12. The outer panel 12 must be capable of yielding upon application of a tactile pressure and provides the completion of an electrical circuit (see column 3, lines 22-25).

Disposed along the inner surface 29 of the outer panel 12 is a layer of flexible polymeric film 30 having a circuit 32 formed thereon (see column 3, lines 45-47). The control panel 10 further has a rigid inner panel 35 that supports an electrical circuit 41. Contact between the circuit 32 and the electric circuit 41 occurs when pressure is applied on the outer panel 12 in the area of the circuit 32. The contact results in the completion of an electrical circuit and an input signal is processed. In summary, the outer panel 12 is critical for

inputting electrical signals for operating the appliance 8 in which the control panel 10 is incorporated into.

In contrast, the operating panel or outer panel 12 of the instant application is not involved in any electrical circuit or signal input for operating an appliance. In other words, one does not press on the outer panel 12 to generate any electrical signals used for controlling the appliance. Claim 1 of the instant application has been amended to support applicant's above-noted arguments that the operating panel does not form a part of nor support a part of the electrical circuit of the at least one component. This is clearly shown in Fig. 2 and explained on page 9 of the instant application which teaches that all operating components are formed in the control circuit.

Claim 2 of the instant application recites "wherein said control circuit is a control module in which all functions which are relevant in terms of control procedures and all operating and display elements including mechanical and optical functional elements are integrated". In contrast, this cannot be true in Martter as Martter requires the outer panel 12 to form part of the control functions.

In view of the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the anticipation rejection based on Martter.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on pages 4-5 of the above-identified Office Action, claim 7 has been rejected as being obvious over Martter in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0052913 to Yamada et al. (hereinafter Yamada) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Claim 7 depends from amended claim 1 which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, claim 7 is also believed to be allowable.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-8 are solicited.

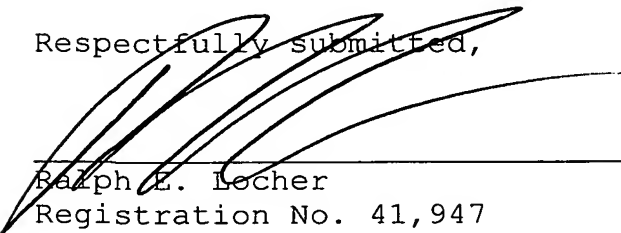
In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested, as it is believed to place the application in

better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

If an extension of time is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Any extension fee associated therewith should be charged to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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